

The State Journal.

PUBLISHED BY KNAPP & JEWETT, EVERY TUESDAY MORNING, NEARLY OPPOSITE THE BANK, AT \$2 A YEAR, OR \$1.50 IN ADVANCE.

VOL. V. NO. 17.

MONTPELIER, (VT.) FEBRUARY 16, 1836.

WHOLENO. 225.

For the State Journal.

THE POST OFFICE REPORT.

In the few brief notices we have seen of the Report of the Post Master General, not one of them has, in all respects, expressed our views, in relation to said document. Mr. Kendall is justly entitled to great credit, for restoring the department over which he presides, in so short a time, from the chaotic and embarrassed condition, in which he found it, to the prosperous state indicated by the report. We will frankly confess that we could not have believed, that so much could have been done in so short a time, towards relieving the department from its fiscal embarrassments. It also strikes us that the suggestions in relation to some modifications in the organization of the Department, are judicious, and we wonder that the proposition to make the rates of postage conformable to the denominations of the national coin, has never been thought of before and adopted.

It is evident at the first glance, that this alteration alone would exceedingly simplify and lighten the labors of the many thousands connected with this Department. It would also tend some to encourage a preference for American coin, which is no trifling consideration, as the general substitution of American small coin for Spanish, would facilitate the period when federal money will entirely supersede the different state currencies; it will greatly simplify the small, every-day money transactions of life; it will prevent in a considerable degree the fluctuation of the amount of small coin in circulation, as, not being sought for abroad like the Spanish coin, it will always remain in circulation at home.

We are too well apprized of the condition of the old account books of the General Post Office to be either surprised or displeased at Mr. Kendall's procuring a new set. An administration committee of Congress informed us that the old books were unintelligible, and disfigured with marginal notes and memoranda, both penned and pencilled, which, however, as it regarded the magnitude of the contracts and transactions of which they—the marginal notes—were the only record, made no mean figure.

The ground Mr. Kendall has taken in relation to the transmission by mail, of publications of a certain character, especially obnoxious to the South, is untenable. If the publishers here or those who receive and circulate them at the South, violate in so doing, the laws of their respective states, to those laws let them answer it. If they have infringed upon no law, by what process of reasoning, or sophistry either, can it be made to appear that they have forfeited their right to privileges common to all? If the laws are defective, let them be so amended, if it can be constitutionally done, as to reach the case in question.—If this cannot be done, why, then it is far better to submit to an evil of uncertain extent, and of so ambiguous character, that the law does not and cannot be made to bear upon it, than with a view to remedy it, inflict upon the country a certain injury, and establish a precedent which will be appealed to in all after times, to justify the exercise, under every form, of arbitrary or undelimited power. If the transmission by mail of printed papers be refused, may not written papers of the same tendency, be also rejected? Suppose the proscribed papers be sealed in an envelope, and mailed as letters, may not the Postmaster break the seal on suspicion? and if so, where is the much lauded security of mail conveyance—where the benefit to the community, of the Post Office establishment?

Though totally dissenting from the views of Mr. Kendall, in relation to the last mentioned subject, yet seeing such were his opinions, their expression was not perhaps misplaced in the Annual Report. But what business has the eulogium—the unmerited eulogium of his immediate predecessor, in an official document? Without any personal knowledge of Mr. Barry, we nevertheless have sufficient knowledge of him, to be able to say, unhesitatingly, that as far as it related to his public career, the eulogium is a burlesque. Even Mr. Kendall's ingenuity could contrive no other way to screen Mr. Barry from the implication of the most notorious and unblushing mismanagement of his department and wanton waste of the public money, as well as those who foisted him into office, from the charge of sacrificing the public good to personal and party preferences, than by declaring him to be

too good and honest a man.—(We cannot give the precise language, not having the report before us.) Too honest a man to watch with fidelity over the trust committed to his hands! We are reminded that Mr. Barry is no more—that his ashes claim the common privileges of exemption from the tread of man. We know he is dead, and may God forgive him, and may his country too forgive him—and she has much to forgive,—but may that country never forget the administration which for so considerable period sustained in a high and responsible office, one who had so long and so palpably shown his utter incompetency for the station he occupied, as Mr. Barry.—Sustained he was, through years of the grossest mismanagement, until the Executive, popular as he was, and his party, strong as it felt itself, could no longer with safety to themselves, endure the enormous weight of their Post Master General. He was therefore judiciously transferred from the head of the Post Office Department to the mission to Spain, from an office in which industry, honesty, and a mediocre understanding, sufficed for the full performance of its duties, to one which required the superaddition of talents of a high order, of a sagacity that can penetrate the secret counsel of others, and a prudence which no art can dupe, with a small abatement of honesty.

The present prosperous condition of the Post Office Department, is, as Mr. Kendall very well knoweth, a severe comment on the mismanagement of his predecessor, and we suspect the eulogy on the President's late favorite is designed to soothe his sensitive and irritable feelings. We cannot but lament that the high offices of our free Republic are kept under such strict surveillance as entirely to repress every sentiment of manly independence.

XYZ.

For the State Journal.

MR. EDITOR:

Voluntary associations, discussions, and publications have been the grand instruments for arresting the progress of intemperance, and for promoting the temperance reform, and I believe drunkards, and their abettors, have never attempted by mob to break down such associations, to prevent such discussions or to rifle from the mail and destroy such publications. Even drunkards have felt too much respect for the authority of the laws and the rights of their fellow citizens to defend themselves by mob, when assaulted in the most invidious manner.

The friends of human rights have endeavored to awaken the attention of this nation to the sin and danger of slavery, by voluntary associations, by free discussions, and publications addressed, not to the slave, but to his master. And slave owners and their abettors have, not only denounced them from high places and low places, but they have trampled upon the laws of their country, violated the sacred rights of freemen, and by the violence of mobs, have endeavored to disperse the friends of freedom, to prevent all free discussion on the sin of slavery, and to destroy those publications that were addressed to the consciences of slave holders. Why is all this excitement and violence? Are the friends of slavery conscious, that slavery is a monster of such horrid mein, that it must be hated, if it be but seen; or are they in fact worse citizens than drunkards? Facts are stubborn things. By their fruits ye shall know them.

Mr. Editor, I have been led to make these remarks by reading the resolves of the Temperance Convention held at Shaftsbury last November, as published in the Vermont Chronicle, December 10th. And I wish to transfer some of those Resolutions into your paper, with a few verbal alterations, which I will mark by underscoring; that the editor of the Chronicle and others may see how circumstances alter cases:

"1. Resolved, That in the opinion of this Convention the use and traffic in human flesh and bones, is an immorality, a violation of the laws of God, and, as such, ought to be, and so far as men obey him will be, universally abandoned.

"2. Resolved, That the use and traffic in human flesh and bones, are productive of the most direful evils, moral, physical and political, and hostile to the best interests of man.

"3. Resolved, That the laws which authorize the sale of human flesh and bones, are immoral, and that those who are en-

gaged in enacting such laws and sustaining them, are accessory to the promotion of vice, and are acting against the best interests of man and of their country.

"5. Resolved, That the Abolition Reform is mainly to be sustained and carried forward, by enlightening and correcting public sentiment in regard to the immoralities and evils of using and encouraging the use and traffic in human flesh and bones.

"6. Resolved, That frequent public discussion is among the most efficient means of enlightening public sentiment, and correcting the false opinions and habits of those who traffic in human flesh and bones, even though it be done in a moderate degree.

"12. Resolved, That the traffic in human flesh and bones is not only immoral, but that it is in direct opposition to the spirit of sound and wholesome legislation, and ought therefore to be immediately abolished by law."

The other resolutions might easily be made to express the views of abolitionists, and to bear as hard upon slaveholders as upon rum-drinkers. We might also say "appetite and avarice" were the main hindrances to the progress of emancipation, as well as to the progress of temperance. And we might say, as well as the orator, that "systematic organization, diffusion of information, frequent discussion," and an appeal to the polls, would be the best means for abolitionists to pursue, as well as the Temperance Societies. But then we might be stigmatized as fanatics and incendiaries; and perhaps even the editor of the Chronicle would rap our knuckles, and cry out abolitionists mean to make the question of slavery a political question, and they will ruin the Republic.

Dear Slavery, you must be crumpled and rocked, and your friends must be coaxed and soothed, and mobs must be kept on the alert to guard your rights; but your daughter Rum and her friends may be kicked and cuffed at pleasure! Intemperance has slain her thousands; but slavery has slain its ten thousands. Why then condemn the less evil and extenuate the greater? And why not employ the same means to banish from our land slavery and intemperance, the mother and her daughter? They are both children of the wicked one. Let Satan have his own!

CONSISTENCY.

[Temperance Tale—by L. M. Sargent, Esq.]

WHAT A CURSE!

OR JOHNNY HODGES, THE BLACKSMITH.

"The doctor is a kind man," said Johnny Hodges, addressing a person of respectable appearance, who was in the act of returning to his pocket-book a physician's bill, which the blacksmith did not find it convenient to pay. "The doctor is a kind man, a very kind man, and has earned his money, I dare say, and I don't begrudge him a shilling of it all; but, for all that, I have not the means of paying his bill, nor any part of it, just now." "Well, well," said the collector, "I shall be this way before long, and will call on you again."

Johnny Hodges thanked him for the indulgence, and proceeded with his work; but the hammer swung heavily upon the anvil, and many a long sigh escaped, before the job in hand was fairly turned off.

Three or four times already, the collector had paid a visit to the blacksmith's shop, who was always ready to admit the justice of the claim, and that the doctor had been very kind and attentive, and had well earned his money; but Johnny was always behindhand; and, though full of professions of gratitude to the good doctor, yet the doctor's bill seemed not very likely to be paid. Familiarity, said the proverb, breeds contempt. This old saw is not apt to work more roughly, in any relation of life, than between the creditor, or the creditor's agent, and the non-paying debtor. The pursuing party is apt to become impatient and indifferent. Upon the present occasion, however, the collector, who was a benevolent man, was extremely patient and forbearing. He had sufficient penetration to perceive, that poor Johnny, for some cause or other, was always exceedingly mortified and pained, by these repeated applications. It did not, however, escape the suspicion of the collector, that there might be a certain, secret cause, for Johnny's inability to pay the doctor's bill.

Intemperance is exhibited, in a great variety of modifications. While some individuals are speedily roused into violent and disorderly action, or humbled to a helpless and harmless mass; others, provided by nature with heads of iron and lathern skins, are equally intemperate, yet scarcely, for many years, present before the world the slightest personal indication of their habitual indulgence.

Johnny Hodges was an excellent workman, and he had abundance of work. It was not easy to account for such an appropriation of his earnings, as would leave him not enough for the payment of the doctor's bill, upon any other supposition, than that

of a wasteful and sinful employment of them, for the purchase of strong drink. Johnny's countenance, to be sure, was exceedingly pale and sallow; but the pale-faced tippler is, by no means, an uncommon spectacle. On the other hand, Johnny was very industrious, constantly in his shop in working hours, and always busily employed.

After an interval of several weeks, the collector called again, and put the customary question, Well, Mr. Hodges, can you pay the doctor's bill? Perhaps there was something unusually hurried or important, or Johnny so thought, in the manner of making the inquiry. Johnny was engaged in turning a shoe, and he hammered it entire out of shape. He laid down his hammer and tongs, and, for a few seconds, rested his cheek upon his hand. "I don't know how I can pay the doctor's bill," said Johnny Hodges. "I've nothing here in the shop, but my tools and a very little stock; and I've nothing at home, but the remainder of our scanty furniture. I know the doctor's bill ought to be paid, and if he will take it, he shall be welcome to our cow, though I have five little children, who live upon the milk." "No, no, Hodges," said the collector, "you are much mistaken, if you suppose the doctor, who is a Christian and a kind-hearted man, would take your cow, or oppress you at all, for the amount of his bill. But how is it, that you, who have always so much work, have never any money?" "Ah, sir," said Johnny Hodges, while he wiped the perspiration from his face, for he was a hard-working man, "Ah, sir," said he, "what a curse it is!—can nothing be done to put a stop to this intemperance? I hear a great deal of the efforts that are making; but still the rum business goes on. If it were not for the temptations to take strong drink, I should do well enough; and the good doctor should not have sent twice for the amount of his bill. Very few of those, who write and talk so much of intemperance, know any thing of our trials and troubles."—I confess," said the collector, "that I have had my suspicions and fears before. Why do you not resolve, that you will never touch another drop? Go, Hodges, like a man, and put your name to the pledge; and pray God to enable you to keep it faithfully."—Why, sir, said the blacksmith, the pledge will do me no good; the difficulty doesn't lie there.—What a curse!

—Is there no prospect of putting an end to intemperance?—"To be sure there is," replied the collector. "If people will sign the pledge, and keep it too, there is no quicquid;—that, suppose they will not sign the pledge," rejoined Johnny Hodges, "still, if rum were not so common as it is, and so easily obtained, the temptation would be taken away."—"That is all very true, but it is every man's duty to do something for himself," replied the collector. "I advise you to sign the pledge, as soon as possible."—"Why, sir," said the blacksmith, "the difficulty doesn't lie there, as I told you; I signed the pledge long ago, and I have kept it well. I never was given to taking spirit in my life. My labor at the forge is pretty hard work, yet I take nothing stronger for drink than cold water."—"I am sorry, that I misunderstood you," replied the collector. "But, since you do not take spirit, and your children, as you have led me to suppose, are of tender years, why are you so anxious for the suppression of intemperance?"—"Because," said poor Johnny Hodges, after a pause, and with evident emotion, to tell you the plain truth, it has made my home a hell, my wife a drunkard, and my children beggars! Poor things," said he, as he brushed away the tears, "they have no mother any more. The old cow, that I offered you, just now, for the doctor's debt, and I believe it would have broken their hearts to have parted with old Brindle;—is more of a mother to them now, than the woman who brought them into this world of trouble. I have little to feed old Brindle with; and the children are running here and there, for a little swill and such matters, to keep her alive. Even the smallest of these poor things will pick up a bunch of hay or a few scattered corn stalks, and fetch it to her, and look on with delight to see her enjoy it. I have seen them all together, when their natural mother, in a drunken sleep, has driven them out of doors, flying for refuge to the old cow, and lying beside her in the shed.—What a curse it is!

"What will become of them and of me," continued this broken hearted man, "I cannot tell. I sometimes fear, that I shall lose my reason, and be placed in the madhouse. Such is the thirst of this wretched woman for rum, that she has repeatedly taken my tools, and carried them five or six miles, and pawned or sold them for liquor. The day before yesterday, I carried home a joint of meat for dinner. When I went home, tired and hungry, at the dinner hour, I found her drunk and asleep upon the floor. She had sold the joint of meat, and spent the money in rum. It's grievous to tell such matters to a stranger, but I can't bear that you or the good doctor should think me ungrateful any longer. I never shall forget the doctor's kindness to me, two years ago, when I had my dreadful fever; and, if ever I can get so much money together, he shall certainly be paid. That fever was brought on, partly by hard work, but the main spring of the matter was in the mind. My wife was getting very bad, and when she was in liquor, her language was both indecent and profane; though, when we were married, there wasn't a more modest girl in the parish. Just before my fever came on, in one of her fits of intemperance, she strove away, and was gone three days and three nights; and to this hour, I have never known where she was all that time. It almost broke my heart. The doctor always said there was

something upon my mind, but I never told him, nor any one else, the cause of my trouble till now. What a curse!—Don't you think, sir, that something can be done to put an end to this terrible curse of intemperance?"—"Your case is a very bad one," said the collector, after a solemn pause, "and I wish I could point out a remedy. You need give yourself no uneasiness about the doctor's bill, for I am sure he will think no more of it, when I have told him your story. If it would not give you too much pain, and take up too much of your time, I should like to be informed, a little more particularly of the commencement and progress of this habit in your wife, which seems to have destroyed your domestic happiness."—Johnny Hodges wiped his brow, and sat down upon a bench in his shop, and the collector took a seat by his side.

"Eight years ago," said Johnny Hodges, "some the first day of next month, I was married. Polly Wilson, that was her maiden name, was twenty-three, and I was four years older. I certainly thought it was the best day's work I ever did, and I continued of that mind, for about five years. Since then Heaven knows I have had reason to think otherwise; for, ever since, trouble has been about my path, and about my bed. About three years ago, my wife took to drink. I cannot tell how it happened; but she always said, herself, that the first drop of gin she ever drank, was upon a washing day when an old Scotch woman persuaded her, that it would keep the cold off her stomach. From that time the habit grew upon her very fast. She has told me an hundred times, in her sober moments, that she would give the world to leave it off, but that she could not, for the life of her. So strong has been her desire to get liquor, that nothing was safe from her grasp. She has sold her children's Sabbath clothes and my own, for rum. After I had gotten well of my fever, I worked hard; and at one time, had laid by nearly enough, as I supposed, to pay the doctor's bill. One day, I had received a dollar for work, and went to my drawer, to add it to the rest; and—all was gone. The drawer had been forced open. She knew that I had been saving the money to pay the doctor and the apothecary, for their services, during my fever; she knew that my sickness had been produced by sleepless nights and a broken heart, on her account; yet she could not resist the temptation. She affirmed, in the most solemn manner, that she knew nothing about it; but two of the little children in answer to my inquiry, told me, that they had seen mamma break open the drawer, and take out the money; and that she went directly over to the grocery, and in about half an hour after she returned, went to sleep so soundly in her chair, that they could not wake her up, to get them a little supper. At that time, I went to Mr. Calvin Leech, the grocer, and told him, that I wondered, as he was a church member, how he could have the heart to ruin the peace of my family. He was very harsh, and told me, that every man must take care of his own wife, and that it was not his business to look after mine. I began to think with Job, that I would not always live. Strange fancies came into my head about that time, and I tried hard to think of some escape from such a world of sin and sorrow; but a kind and merciful God would not let me take my own wild way. I read my Bible; and the poor children kept all the while in my way, smiling sweetly in my face, and driving all thoughts from my mind. My oldest boy was then about seven. "Don't take on so, daddy," the little fellow used to say, when he found me shedding tears, "don't cry daddy; I shall be big enough to blow the bellows, next year." I have tried to keep up for the sake of these poor children; and few would be better, for their years, if mother did not teach some of them to curse and swear. They have the same bright look and gentle temper that my wife had, when we were married. There never was a milder temper than Polly's, before this curse fell upon the poor creature. Oh, sir, it is nothing but rum that has ruined our hopes of happiness in this world. How strange it is, that nothing can be done to stay such a dreadful plague!

The collector shook the poor blacksmith by the hand, and bade him keep up his spirits as well as he could, and put his trust in God's providence. Promising to make him a friendly call in the course of a few days, he took his leave.

This interview with the blacksmith, had caused his visitor to contemplate the subject of the temperance reform, somewhat in a novel point of view. The unfortunate and frequently repeated interrogatory of Johnny Hodges, "Can't something be done to put an end to the evils of intemperance?" to most individuals, would appear to savor of gross ignorance, in the inquirer, as to those amazing efforts, which have already been made, at home and abroad. But it must not be forgotten, that poor Hodges was no theorizer, in that department of domestic wretchedness, which arises from intemperance. He was well aware that a prodigious effort had been made for the purification of the world, by voluntary associations adopting the pledge of total abstinence. He perfectly understood, that all those who had subscribed such a pledge, and faithfully adhered to it were safe from the effects of intemperance, in their own persons. Yet this poor fellow cried aloud, out of the very depths of his real misery, "Can't something be done to put an end to the evils of intemperance?" His own bitter experience had taught him that there was one person who could never be prevailed upon to sign the pledge; one upon whose faithful execution of her domestic duties, his whole earthly happiness depended; the partner of his

bosom; the mother of his children; and she had become a lathsome and ungovernable drunkard. He rationally inferred, indeed he well knew the fact, from his own observation upon the surrounding neighborhood, that such an occurrence was not of an uncommon character. Intemperate husbands, intemperate wives and intemperate children were all around him. Johnny Hodges was a man of good common sense. He reasoned forward to the future from the past. He entertained no doubt, that, notwithstanding the most energetic, voluntary efforts of all the societies upon the face of the earth, drunkenness would certainly continue, in a greater or less degree, so long as the means of drunkenness were suffered to remain. The process of reasoning in Johnny's mind may be very easily described. So long, thought he, as rum-selling continues to be sanctioned by law and grog shops are legalized at every corner, so long as even deacons and church members distill rum, and sell it, reducing the temperate drinker's noble to the drunkard's nincompoop, and that nine-pence to nothing and jail; winning away the bread from the miserable tippler's children; and causing the husband and wife to hate and abhor the very presence of each other; so long a very considerable number of persons, who will not sign the pledge, will be annually converted from temperate men and women, into drunken vagabonds and paupers. The question is therefore reduced to this: Can no effective measures be provided by law, to prevent a cold, calculating, mercenary body of men from trafficking any longer, in broken hopes, broken hearts, and broken constitutions; and to restrain, at least, deacons and church members, who pray to the Lord to lead them not into temptation, from laying snares, along the highways and hedges of the land, to entrap the feet of their fellow creatures, and tempt their weaker brethren to their ruin?

A month or more passed away, before the collector's business brought him again into the neighborhood of the blacksmith's shop. Johnny Hodges was at work as usual. He appeared dejected and care worn. His visitor shook him by the hand, and told him that the doctor said he should consider him, as old Boerhaave used to say, one of his best patients, for God would be his paymaster. "Never think of the debt any more, Johnny," said the collector. "The doctor has sent you his bill receipted; and he bade me tell you that if a little money would help you in your trouble, you should be heartily welcome to it."—"Indeed," said the blacksmith, "the doctor is a kind friend; but I suppose nothing can be done to put an end to this curse."—"I fear there will not be, at present," said the collector, "rum is the idol of the people. The friends of temperance have petitioned the legislature to pull this idol down. Now there are, in that very body a great many members, who love the idol dearly; there are many who are sent thither expressly to keep the idol up. So you see, petitioning the legislature, such as it now is, to abolish the traffic in rum, is like petitioning the priests of Baal to pull down their false god. But you look pale and sad; has any new trouble come upon you, or do you find the old one more grievous to bear?"—"Ah, sir," said this man of many woes, "we have had trouble enough new and old, since you were here last. Intemperance must be a selfish vice, I am sure. About a fortnight ago, my wife contrived, while I was gone to the city to procure a few bars of iron, to sell our old cow to a drover; and this woman, once so kind-hearted and thoughtful of her children, would see them starve, rather than deprive herself of the means of intoxication. She has been in liquor every day since. But all this is nothing compared with our other late trial. Last Monday night I was obliged to be from home, till a very late hour. I had a promise from a neighbor to sit up at my house till my return, to look after the children and to prevent the house from being set on fire. But the promise was forgotten. When I returned, about eleven o'clock, all was quiet. I struck a light, and finding my wife was in bed and sound asleep, I looked round for my children. The four older children I readily found, but little Peter, our infant, about thirteen months old, I could find nowhere. After a careful search, I shook my wife by the shoulder, to wake her up, that I might learn, if possible, what had become of the child. After some time though evidently under the influence of liquor, I awakened the wretched woman, and made her understand me. She then made a sign that it was in the bed. I proceeded to examine, and found the poor suffering babe beneath her. She had pressed the life out of its little body. It was quite dead. It was but yesterday, that I put it into the ground. If you can credit it, the miserable mother was so intoxicated that she could not follow it to the grave. What can a poor man do with such a burden as this? The owner of the little tenement, in which I have lived, has given me notice to quit, because he says, and reasonably enough too, that the chance of my wife's setting it on fire is growing greater every day. However, I feel that within me, that promises a release before long, from all this insupportable misery. But what will become of my poor children?" Johnny sat down upon a bench and burst into tears. His visitor, as we have said, was a kind-hearted man. "Suppose I should get some discreet person to talk with your wife," said he. Johnny raised his eyes and his hands, at the same moment. "Talk with her," he replied, "you might as well talk with the whirlwind; the abuse, which she poured on me this morning, for proposing to bring our good minister to talk with her, would have made your hair stand on end. No, I am heart broken, and undone for this world. I have no hope, save in a better, through the mercies of God." The visitor took the poor